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Strikes in the UK. The symptom of a sick capitalism



Sources: Rebellion

In a simple exercise, capitalism could be compared to the process of a viral infection. A virus lives at the expense and parasitically of the energy and metabolism of its host. Similarly, capital exists only by extracting surplus value from workers' labor and life time.

In the infectious process, it is of utmost importance for the virus not to completely eliminate its host organism, since it depletes the very source of its energy. This makes the process of reproduction and evolution of a virus one of constant contradiction: on the one hand, extracting the energy of its host, which will obviously cause its disease, but on the other hand, preserving the life of its host, because its existence depends on it. In other

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words, find a way to prolong the agony of the organism that suffers from the infection to its maximum level.

In the same way as the constant Evolution of viruses and their coexistence with different living organisms makes that they invest all their genetic machinery in the invention of new and more Sophisticated mechanisms to evade recognition and go unnoticed Faced with the immune system, likewise capital usually invests huge efforts to make it impossible to react against them and what is more important, in evasive before its identification and control. However, at End There will always be episodes in which the infection is such that the fever It increases and the body tries to shake itself and fight the virus. In our world, That of capitalism, this seems to be one of those moments.

The beginning of 2023 marks a symptomatic moment in the heart of the European region. In the United Kingdom, Streets have hosted one of the most numerous and sustained Uprisings of the English proletariat in recent history. What it looked like One of the many cycles of wage negotiations between unions Trade unions and the business community has become an intersectoral movement that Under the slogan "*Enough is enough!*" It has aroused the solidarity and support of a cluster of social sectors, which still suffers from a political movement or organization that leads or mediates its Claims.

The Conservative government has used The strategy of intimidation through messages ranging from new laws to outlaw the strike, up to the use of military force for the Containment of social protest. Attrition has also been part of his plan, Well, several of the sectors that are the protagonists of this cycle of protests are essential. For the social functioning and with the prolongation of the strike is foreseeable that popular support can be quickly reversed against him. Who They lead this movement, they have been mainly the proletariat of the sector. hospital, with a central participation of the colleges of nurses; the rail and urban mass transport carriers; and the body teachers, as well as education workers.

Very much contrary to the predictions of the British government, the strike timetable has shown resilience and sound planning on the part of the proletarian organisations (Figure 1). Such has been the strength that this government, which called nostalgically to make use of *Thatcherism* and not give in to the demands of the workers, has ordered speed at the

dialogue tables before the announcement of new branches and sectors that announce their entry into the strike.

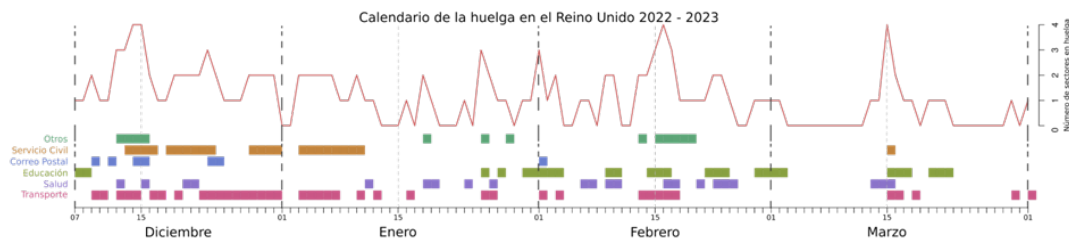


Figure 1. Calendar of the strike in the United Kingdom. The sectors presented here include several subsectors, each with its particular demands.

Data: <https://www.strikecalendar.co.uk/>

The popular support and sympathy that has shielded this strike is intimately related to the sharpening of the crisis of capital. Faced with the difficulty of increasing and even maintaining productivity in order to extract profits from the proletariat, capital has chosen to put even more pressure on the pockets of families, who on average have seen their wages drastically reduced in the last two years (almost 10%). This actual loss in your monthly payments is directly related to the rising cost of living. According to the UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS), the rise in inflation over the past period has been driven mainly by increases in the number of rates for electricity, gas as well as food and non-alcoholic beverages^[1]. Costs associated with housing have become the main economic burden in the last period (Figure 2).

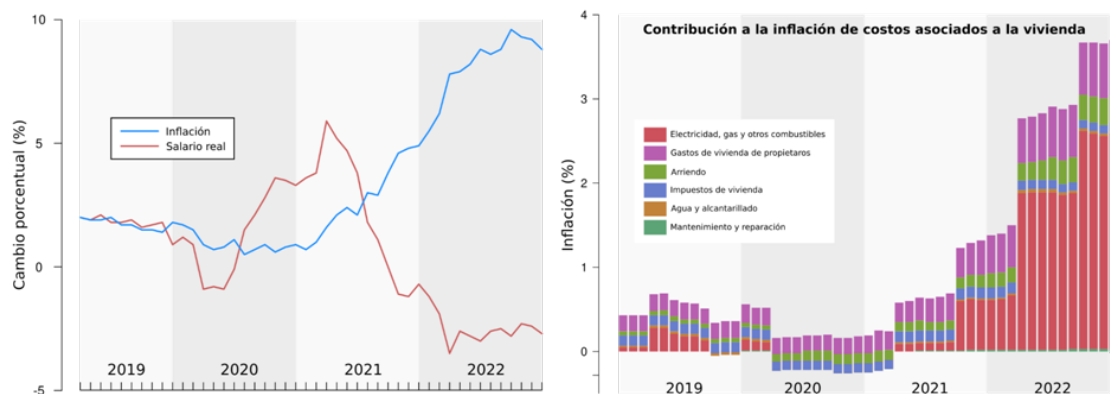


Figure 2. Left: Dynamics of Real Wages and Inflation in the period between April 2019 and January 2023. Right: Dynamics of the contribution to inflation by housing-related costs. Data taken from the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom.

And in the end, strikes are The result of a harsh reality: families of workers with jobs of full-time they must go to charity donations of food to supply your diet^[2]; one 24% increase in homelessness in rural areas since 2022^[3]; Growing unfortunate cases of elderly people who wander during the winter whole days inside the buses and subways of public transport, because They have no way to pay the monthly payments to heat their homes.

The government's explanations of Rising cost of living revolve around cutting off supplies energy due to the war in Ukraine. However, faced with this excuse, Simple and ideologized, hides the reality that is increasingly difficult to hide or disguise. The same companies that increase the prices of user fees, far from Register economic losses, have profited extraordinarily in the last year. For example, *Shell* reported its Maximum profit in 115 years^[4] and *BP* doubled its profits in comparison with the previous year^[5]. The outrage at having a growing population of workers on the brink of Desperation contrasts grotesquely with record profits. companies that are their executioners.

The widespread wave of strikes in the United Kingdom lays bare the contradictory relationship of capital in a state advanced crisis. As at some point, the virus within the organism breaks its state of dormancy and advances towards widespread destruction of its host organism, capital shows symptoms of destruction generalized source of wealth: the proletariat.

The days of strikes in the Kingdom Together they have been successful so far because they have made a great effort in break the division between the proletariat segregated into different sectors and Branches of production. The use of trade union organizations as Platforms to mobilize the proletariat that is not necessarily found sheltered with a labor hiring model or that is part of that army The increase in the number of unemployed has been the best resource that has shielded from Strength this growing movement.

However, the recent moments of crisis herald an extraordinary opportunity to shake the social organism from an infection that has condemned it to a very long and exhausting agony. These times require bold actions that integrate the experience of labour organisations into the proletariat as a whole. Just as capital tries to snatch vital time beyond offices and jobs, so struggles must go beyond working hours.

Notes:

^[1] Consumer price inflation, UK: January 2023. Bulletin Published on February 15, 2023.

In:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/latest>

^[2] Food and You 2 – Wave 3. In: <https://doi.org/10.46756/sci.fsa.ejl793>

^[3] Covered fragment on BBC. In: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHzdynrAJ38>

The full report "*Homelessness in the Countryside: A Hidden Crisis*". In: <https://englishrural.org.uk/rural-homelessness-counts/>

^[4] *Shell reports highest profits in 115 years*. BBC. February 02 2023. In: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-64489147>

^[5] *BP profit jump sparks calls for bigger windfall tax*. BBC. November 01 2022. In: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-63468313>

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